

Public Legal Education  
and Information Service  
of New Brunswick

# 2018 2019

ANNUAL REPORT



Helping the Public Know the Law

# Mission Statement

## Helping the Public Know the Law!

PLEIS-NB is a non-profit organization and a registered charity. Our mandate is to develop bilingual educational products and services about the law for the general public in order to promote access to the legal system. Our goal is to assist the public in identifying and understanding their legal rights and responsibilities, and attaining self-help skills where appropriate, to improve their ability to deal with legal issues.

To meet the diverse information needs of people living in New Brunswick, PLEIS-NB has adopted the following objectives:

- (i) To respond to individual and community requests for information about the law, the legal system, sources of legal assistance and law reform;
- (ii) To increase the availability of easily understood general information about the law, as well as law-related information on specific topics;
- (iii) To promote a greater understanding of how the law affects everyday activities and to facilitate self-help skills; and,
- (iv) To act as a clearinghouse for information about the law by promoting awareness of and access to legal resources in the community, while encouraging the coordination of public legal education initiatives.



**Public Legal Education  
and Information Service  
of New Brunswick**

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[www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca](http://www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca)  
[www.familylawnb.ca](http://www.familylawnb.ca)  
[www.youthjusticenb.ca](http://www.youthjusticenb.ca)  
[www.thehealingjourney.ca](http://www.thehealingjourney.ca)

# Executive Director's Report



Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick had a productive and busy year educating the public about the law. We participated in access to justice meetings at the national and provincial levels. We are pleased to see the recognition that has been made to the integral role of law information in fostering access to justice.

Our family law information line had another successful year serving over 2000 unique individuals. As well, the public, especially individuals who cannot afford a lawyer, continued to benefit from the delivery of family law workshops around the province.

We undertook extensive dissemination activities to share the family law resources created in the previous fiscal. Our social media campaigns provided fruitful in fostering awareness of the new resources. Our collaboration with Victim Services, Department of Public Safety saw the distribution of new resources for victims of crime. With a focus on testimonial aids for child victims. We were pleased to create a series of well-received resources called *Felix Goes to Court*.

As always, I extend appreciation to the PLEIS-NB Board Members, staff, law students, and volunteers, who play a significant role in our quest to promote access to justice. And, I would be remiss not to mention our funders, namely, Justice Canada, the New Brunswick Law Foundation, and the Office of the Attorney General of New Brunswick. Without their support, we would not be able to successfully pursue our special projects which benefit so many vulnerable individuals in need of legal information and services.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with community groups, government, courts, law enforcement, and the legal sector. Together we will make important strides in enhancing access to the justice system.

*Deborah Doherty, Ph.D.*  
*Executive Director*

# People

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 2018-2019

### Clea Ward (President)

*McInnes Cooper*

### Alaina Nicholson

*Financial and Consumer Services Commission*

### Robert LeBlanc

*Faculté de droit, Université de Moncton*

### Martha McClellan (Vice-president),

*Director of Career Development and External Relationships, Faculty of Law, University of New Brunswick*

### Jason Dempsey

*Phillips Dempsey, Moncton*

### Elena Bosi

*Chief Legislative Counsel, Legislative Services, Office of the Attorney General*

## STAFF – VOLUNTEERS 2018 - 2019

### Current Staff

Dr. Deborah Doherty, *Executive Director*

Amber Chisholm, J.D., *Family Law Information Line Coordinator*

Julie Martineau, *Administrative Assistant*

### Experiential/Clinical Procedure Law Students, University of New Brunswick

Sarah Dingwell, *UNB*

Jasmine Serre, *UNB*

### Summer Law Students 2018

Ciara Jarrett, *UNB Legal Researcher*

Morgan Kavanaugh, *UNB Legal Researcher*

### Out-going Staff

Spencer Flynn (*legal researcher*)

### Pro Bono Students

Tanya Gulati, *UNB*

Lauren Trueman, *UNB*

Elen Gasparian, *UNB*

Carolyne Albert, *UdeM*

Martine Rouselle, *UdeM*

# Programs and Services

## Toll-Free Family Law Information Line – 1-888-236-2444

This popular service assisted **2046** unique callers this past fiscal year. The majority of callers, 62%, requested general information about their family law matter. Of those who wanted assistance with procedural matters, 15% of the questions related to divorce procedure, 13% asked about child support procedure, and 11% wanted help with questions related to custody and access.

Callers found out about the toll-free line from many sources such as Legal Aid, courts and support enforcement staff. The leading referral source was the Internet at 16%. Of those who disclosed gender, 63% were female. This is a bilingual service and 17% of the callers requested service in French.

Financial assistance to operate the toll-free line is provided by the Department of Justice and Office of the Attorney General.

## Family Law Workshop for SRLs

The Family Law Workshop initiative is a core activity that is supported by the New Brunswick Law Foundation and the Department of Justice and Office of Attorney General. This year, classes were offered over a 7 month period as we took a five month hiatus from April to August to hire new staff and provide time for administration and bookings.

Our lawyer volunteers are dedicated to promoting access to the family justice system. During this time, we organized and scheduled 27 workshops, **23 of which were delivered**. This reflects cancellations due to inclement weather or low registration. Only 2 French workshops were delivered. Total registration for workshops this year was 267, with **156** people attending. Approximately **5,000** family law publications were distributed to the Family Law Workshops participants in their information kits. Evaluation feedback from participants and lawyers remains extremely positive. Many commented on the usefulness value of the information kits.

## Websites

### PLEIS-NB ([www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca](http://www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca)):

Our main site features access to most of the resources that can be found on the specialized sites as well. This past year, the PLEIS-NB site had **312,220** unique page views, nearly triple the previous year. The most viewed pages were *No Means No, Peace Bonds and Restraining Orders* and *Probate of a Will*.

The most viewed French resources were *“What Parents should know about Child Protection; Being an Executor and When Couples Separate*.

**Family Law NB ([www.familylawnb.ca](http://www.familylawnb.ca)):** There is a separate English and French version of this website. Usage of both has been steadily increasing over the past few years. This fiscal, there were **105,063** unique visits to the English side and **11,887** on the French side, resulting in **116,950** unique page views overall.

The top page views were to *“Family Law Forms”* and self-help guides, particularly child support, custody and access and divorce.



# Publications and Dissemination Activities

Demand for hard copies of our numerous resources remains high. Over the past year, PLEIS-NB distributed approximately **70,000 publications**. Most publications are available free of charge for quantities fewer than 50, or they can be accessed on our websites, in libraries and community agencies across the province. An extensive mailout was conducted of most of our family law resources that had been revised March 2018, The following popular resources were revised and reprinted this past fiscal.

## • Peace Bonds and Protective Orders

With the creation of a resources last year to explain the new law on Emergency Intervention Orders, and the creation of resources dealing with *Emergency Protection Orders on Reserve*, the public was sometimes confused about which of these remedies would be appropriate for them. How do peace bonds relate to other protection orders relate such as no contact orders, and civil restraining orders. To help explain these remedies, PLEIS-NB decided to revise a popular resource on peace bonds for victims to ensure that it touches on all of the various options for protective orders. The 2019 version is now called *"Peace Bonds and Protective Orders"*.

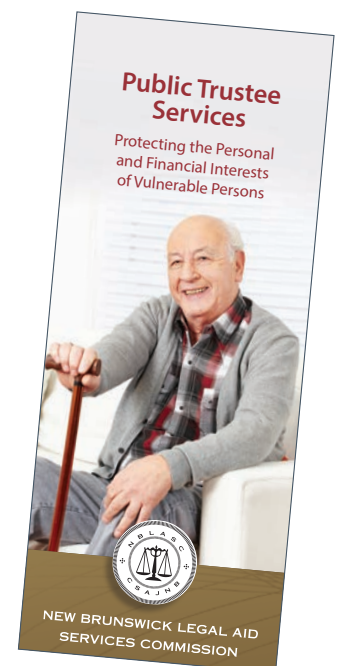
This new resource was distributed to Victim Services offices, Crown prosecutor offices, Provincial Courts, and Legal Aid offices, as well as libraries and community groups around the province.

## • Public Trustee Services

Another publication that was updated this past year, in collaboration with the Office of the Public Trustee, was the brochure about the services available for individuals who, as a last resort, must apply for "Public Trustee Services". For the most part, the service is used by seniors who need someone to act on their behalf to make financial, personal or health care decisions when they are not able. They may also need someone to be the executor of their estate. This brochure explains the services and how to contact the Office of the Public Trustee.

Other high demand resources that were updated include:

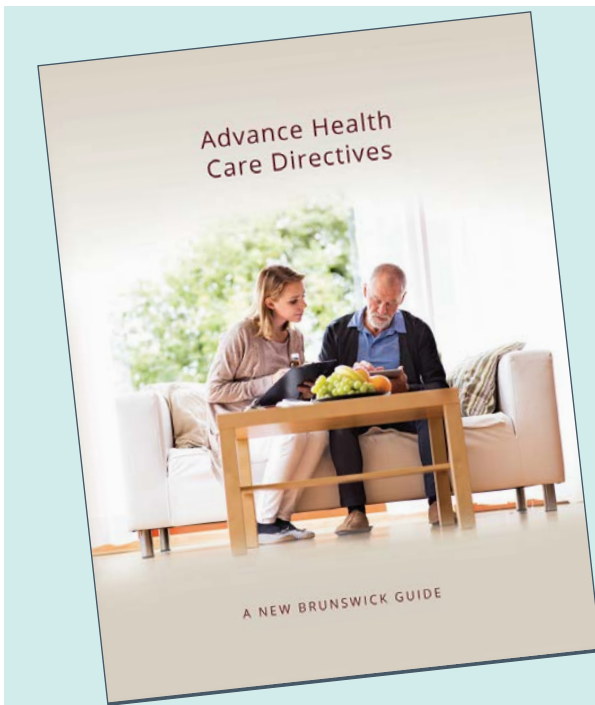
- *Abuse and Neglect of Seniors*
- *Going to a Nursing Home*



# Projects and Contracts

## • Advance Health Care Directives

A new guide on *Advance Health Care Directives* was launched by PLEIS-NB during the Canadian Bar Association- NB Branch Mid Winter Meeting in February 2019. The guide explains the legal requirements for making a health care directive and how a directive relates to other legal tools such as powers of attorney for personal care and/or financial and property matters. The guide includes at the end a detachable “health care directive form”.



New guide announced: From left: Hilary Young, law professor (UNB); Minister of Health, Hon. Hugh Flemming; executive director PLEIS-NB, Deborah Doherty; and Jodi Lee-White, lawyer.

PLEIS-NB acknowledges the contribution of the following stakeholders in the development of the guide: New Brunswick Department of Health, Horizon Health Network, Vitalité Health Network, members of the Law Society of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Medical Society, Public Trustee Services, and the Faculty of Law, University of New Brunswick. As well, the New Brunswick Law Foundation has provided project funding to produce sufficient quantities in the new fiscal year to distribute to libraries, hospitals, law offices, community agencies, special care facilities, nursing homes and seniors' groups. The guide and fillable form are also available free on the [PLEIS-NB website](#).



### Safety Planning for Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

This was the **third** year of PLEIS-NB's five-year partnership with Victim Services, Department of Public Safety. We have been working collaboratively to create resources for victims of crime and updating existing ones.

#### • Updating/New Resources for Victims

One of our first activities last spring was the distribution of the revised and updated pamphlets on *Services for Victims of Crime*, *Restitution* and *Impact Statements*.

Another resource that was revised and printed in this fiscal year was “*Are you a Victim of Intimate Partner Violence? Testifying in Criminal Court*”. It is a welcome addition to the other resources relating to domestic violence and emergency protection orders.

These resources have been distributed to Victim Services offices, Crown prosecutors' offices, Legal Aid offices, libraries, and community agencies where the public can access them.



### • Felix Goes to Court – Testimonial Aids for Child Victims

In year 3 we focused efforts on developing testimonial aids for child victims of crime who were going to court. This was aided by the findings of a survey we conducted the previous year on resources and supports available across Canada for child victims of abuse or intimate partner violence.

The center-piece of these resources is a storybook called *“Felix Goes to Court”*. In simple language, with engaging graphics, the structured story line takes a puppy named Felix from being the victim of a crime, to calling the police, to meeting with victim services where he finds out he can get help for his nightmares and feelings. We see the puppy going back to victim services for court preparation and then testifying by video camera in separate room with a victim service worker as a support person. Finally, Felix learns the Judge has found the accused guilty. Felix draws a picture for his *“impact statement”* to show the court how the crime hurt him. In the end, the offender is sentenced to *“clean up in the community, stay away from Felix and behave himself.”*

The story book is accompanied by a resource with *“Tips for Parents and Helpers”*. It is intended to help them reinforce the key messages in the storybook and find referrals to other important resources. As well, there is an *Activity Book* with colouring pages and more tips about how to stay calm when going to court.

As well, Victim Services Offices were sent Felix *“stress balls”* and soft knit *“Felix comfort puppies”*. These puppies with name tags were created as a custom order by vendors at the Fredericton Boyce Market. These puppies can be cuddled by the child while reading the story book about going to court and they could even accompany the child to court.



# Special Events

## Annual BBQ 2018

Each year PLEIS-NB holds a BBQ at the end of the summer to thank everyone who contributed to our success. As a charitable organization, we rely on the volunteer contribution of community partners, funders, board members, law students, and many members of the legal community.

The BBQ was held on August 24, 2018 and our law students selected a “Safari” theme for this year’s festivities. The BBQ is a small gesture of gratitude to everyone who supports our efforts to educate and inform the public about the law. We think this is an important component of access to justice.



The PLEIS- NB Safari Team (from left to right): Spencer Flynn, Amber Chisholm, Deborah Doherty, Ciara Jarrett, Morgan Kavanagh



Thanks to Costco Wholesale and Sobeys Regent Street for contributing to our event.



2018 Summer Law Students – Morgan Kavanagh and Ciara Jarrett.

# Financial Overview 2018-19

teed saunders  
doyle Chartered professional  
accountants  
& advisors

An independent  
member of  DFK  
INTERNATIONAL

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Public Legal Education & Information Service Of New Brunswick Inc.

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Public Legal Education & Information Service Of New Brunswick Inc. (the Corporation), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2019, and the statements of changes in net assets, revenues and expenditures and cash flow for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Corporation as at March 31, 2019, and the results of its operations and its cash flow for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Corporation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with those requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Corporation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Corporation or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Corporation's financial reporting process.

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment

39 Canterbury  
565 Priestman St

### PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION & INFORMATION SERVICE OF NEW BRUNSWICK INC. Statement of Revenues and Expenditures Year Ended March 31, 2019

|   | 2019            | 2018              |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>REVENUE</b>                                      |                 |                   |
| Justice Canada                                      | \$ 70,000       | \$ 134,956        |
| Miscellaneous project revenue                       | 15,601          | 26,751            |
| New Brunswick Department of Public Safety           | 91,644          | -                 |
| New Brunswick Law Foundation                        | 90,000          | 90,000            |
| New Brunswick Department of Justice                 | 74,525          | 239,707           |
| Women's Equality Branch                             | 5,150           | -                 |
| Publications Sales and Other Revenue                | 15,384          | 496               |
|   | <u>362,304</u>  | <u>491,910</u>    |
| <b>COST OF SALES</b>                                |                 |                   |
| Administration                                      | 13,836          | 31,429            |
| Conference and travel                               | 11,716          | 19,438            |
| Miscellaneous                                       | 4,259           | 1,418             |
| Office expense                                      | 14,557          | 22,709            |
| Printing and distribution                           | 50,162          | 152,445           |
| Professional services                               | 79,055          | 94,397            |
| Salaries and benefits                               | 185,073         | 178,212           |
|   | <u>358,658</u>  | <u>500,048</u>    |
| <b>EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b> | <b>\$ 3,646</b> | <b>\$ (8,138)</b> |